

United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Secretary-General announces 34-nation composition of United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission to monitor border area between the two countries.
- ◆ Secretary-General calls on captors of two Swedish nationals in Kashmir to release them "immediately and unharmed".
- ◆ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says relief supplies already on ground in northern Iraq are "only a drop in the bucket" compared to what refugees will need.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has announced that 34 nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, will contribute forces to the 1,440-member United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in the Persian Gulf.

In a letter to Security Council President Paul Noterdaeme of Belgium, dated 11 April, the Secretary-General said he intended "to proceed without delay" in the deployment of the force.

An advance 30-man team, led by Major-General Gunther Greindl of Austria, has been in the area since Saturday.

In addition to the five permanent Council members, the countries that have volunteered to send contingents to the Iraq-Kuwait border are: Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela.

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The Secretary-General said today through his spokeswoman that he was deeply concerned by the threats issued by the captors of two Swedish

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nationals, Johan Jansson and Jan Ole Loman, who were kidnapped in Kashmir on 31 March.

The Secretary-General said he deplored violence and human suffering of any kind and, in this connection, believed that no aim could be furthered by the taking of innocent hostages. He called on the captors to release Mr. Jansson and Mr. Loman "immediately and unharmed".

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said today, in an update on the refugee situation in northern Iraq, that so far donor nations had pledged some \$22 million in cash and several million more in "in-kind" contributions. All funds were already obligated and all in-kind contributions already distributed.

The agency believed, however, that the relief supplies already on the ground, or in the relief pipeline, constituted "only a drop in the bucket" compared to what the refugees would need. The number of Iraqis massed along the Turkish border had grown to an estimated 600,000, with another 900,000 people seeking sanctuary in Iran, the agency said.

The High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata, was currently visiting refugee camps in Iran and Turkey to further assess the needs of the nations most directly affected by the current crisis, UNHCR said. Mrs. Ogata had yesterday presented a cheque for \$2 million to the Iranian authorities to assist them in dealing with the refugees.

The UNHCR said it would begin tomorrow an emergency airlift of supplies to Iran and Turkey. Some 36 aircraft loaded with \$2.5 million worth of supplies were scheduled to take off from Pakistan, Egypt and Europe through 28 April. The cost of the emergency operation, including transport, was expected to total \$4 million, the agency said.

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